



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH  
LANSING

JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM  
GOVERNOR

JANET OLSZEWSKI  
DIRECTOR

November 21, 2008

Dear VFC Providers:

Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) is now using a centralized vaccine distribution system through McKesson ([www.McKesson.com](http://www.McKesson.com)), where vaccine is shipped directly to your office. All Michigan local health departments (LHDs) and over 1,100 Vaccines for Children (VFC) providers are using the new system.

We would like to make you aware of the efforts made to ensure that your vaccine order arrives safely and within a reasonable timeframe. While we are aware there have been issues, we have experienced much success statewide. It is critical to note that your LHD serves as your Primary Point of Contact (PPOC) for all matters. When issues are brought to our attention through your PPOC, MDCH immediately contacts the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and McKesson. The MDCH VFC team has a comprehensive internal tracking system to address issues as they arise, and to identify and target trends across the state.

There are key concepts MDCH has pinpointed as critical markers of a successful transition. The Vaccine Inventory Module (VIM) within the Michigan Care Improvement Registry (MCIR) requires daily staff time to keep up with data entry, doses administered, and balancing of inventory. It's critical that you support and allow this work to be completed routinely, as it will significantly decrease the workload in the long run. The need for physical refrigerator counts to account for your vaccine will assist you with decreasing the chances that you may incur a vaccine loss or waste. Your staff will gradually become more accustomed to and faster with this process, and it becomes an easy and efficient method of record keeping.

While this may at first appear to be an enormous burden on your practice, it is important to keep in mind the cost savings benefits of VIM. For example:

- There is no longer a need for your staff to travel to the LHD for vaccines;
- You are accounting for all doses, making it easier to order correct amounts;
- This process can greatly prevent expiration and potential losses with vaccine wastage.

There is a minimal amount of public vaccine stocked at the MDCH main vaccine storage depot in Lansing. All orders are filled either through McKesson or Merck© for frozen vaccines. This transition has taken considerable time and effort from state and local health staff. There is substantial time and training required of staff at your office. For your commitment to this, we are truly grateful. We acknowledge that in the first few months, it will be somewhat cumbersome, and we appreciate the efforts of your staff and

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their dedication to the VFC program. MDCH commits to maintaining regionally placed staff, updating the information at [www.michigan.gov/vfc](http://www.michigan.gov/vfc), and collaborative efforts on the part of local Immunization Coordinators and MCIR regional staff.

There are some aspects that your staff is already used to doing that will continue. For example:

- **Where To Send Public Vaccine Orders** – VFC provider orders are still placed via email or fax, to be approved by your LHD staff.
- **Frozen Vaccine Shipments** - Varicella vaccine and MMRV (currently not available) will continue to be shipped directly from Merck & Co. to your office.
- **Viable Vaccine that Cannot Be Used Before It Expires** – If you find that you'll be unable to use a vaccine before it expires you may contact the LHD to discuss options. LHDs will be able to make determinations on possible redistribution, suggest ways to use the vaccine (such as recall activities), or contact the MDCH VFC staff if needed. However, it's important to note that the LHDs are not obligated to act as a redistribution center.

As mentioned earlier, key in this transition is the LHD as the PPOC for communication between jurisdictional providers and the state. There is a tremendous amount of preparation, scheduling, hands-on teaching, and patience required to completely transfer VFC providers to the new VIM functions in the MCIR. During the next year, we still anticipate transition activity to occur, particularly when a MCIR based electronic *e-ordering* system is available statewide. Given that Michigan is designing an in-house e-ordering system through MCIR, a routinely used software application, we are certain that once transition is complete, all VFC providers in the state are going to be thrilled with the user-friendly and fast method of ordering and receiving VFC and other publicly purchased vaccine.

Through this time of adjustment, there are some things about the VFC program that have changed now that you are using the VIM system, including:

- **Vaccine Shipping** - Vaccine is shipped from the McKesson distribution center based in Memphis, TN. FedEx and United Parcel Service (UPS) will primarily ship the vaccine. The vaccine will be properly packed to maintain proper temperatures for up to 72 hours.
  - Providers are expected to open containers, inspect vaccine, and store at appropriate temperatures within two hours of the shipment being delivered.
  - When the vaccine arrives, your staff should be checking to make sure the type of vaccine, number of doses, lot numbers, and expiration dates in the box match the packing list. If there are any discrepancies, you should contact the PPOC (your LHD).

- Containers come with postage paid labeling to facilitate their return via United Parcel Service (UPS) should they be compromised in transit. Check the underside of the opening flap for the return label.
  - Other arrangements would be considered if we are experiencing a national vaccine shortage. For example, since Hib vaccine is in shortage now you might be required to get your Hib allocation through the LHD.
- **Vaccine Order and Arrival** – MDCH suggests allowing 10-15 business days (two to three weeks), for orders to arrive once approved through the LHD. Although it may arrive sooner, knowing this will help ensure that you maintain an adequate stock of vaccines and don't risk running out of vaccine.
- Vaccine orders from VFC providers are processed by MDCH through the local immunization staff and transmitted to CDC on a daily basis (Monday - Friday). McKesson processes orders within three to five shipping days. Only in very unique circumstances will McKesson ship vaccine on a priority basis. If your office has special handling instructions or limited delivery times, record this on your order form to ensure that vaccine is delivered within the specified time. Prior to releasing your order to MDCH, the LHDs will be monitoring and updating your provider information and collecting and approving required supporting documentation. Once you submit your order and supporting documentation, the PPOC is expected to review and analyze your temperature logs, ordering patterns, inventories, MCIR doses administered reports, and other quality assurance measures that might be unique to your practice. LHDs are expected to contact your office if there is a problem with the documentation or order and alert you to the status of the order.
- **Reports Due** - Supporting documentation forms will be sent to your LHD. All orders MUST have all required supporting documentation to be approved.
- **Frequency of Ordering Vaccine** – You are ordering according to a pre-determined Tiered Ordering Frequency (TOF) approved by your LHD and is based on the volume of vaccine used (compared to your VFC provider profile) plus your office storage capacity. We know that it may take some time to adjust to the new ordering schedule, so please contact the PPOC with questions.
- **Returning Wasted and Expired Vaccine** - Expired and wasted vaccine is returned to McKesson, including Merck vaccine. At no time should viable vaccine be returned to McKesson. The PPOC can help work out a solution to best use vaccine close to the expiration date. In the event of a vaccine loss, you should fill out the *Vaccine Storage and Handling Loss Report* and fax it to the LHD, keeping a copy for your records. The original copy should be enclosed in the McKesson box with the vaccine. Please write "Non-viable Vaccine enclosed" on the pre-paid return shipping label which is located on the inside flap of the shipping container.
- **Maintaining current versions of Vaccine Information Statements (VIS)s** - Michigan VIS forms will no longer be shipped with vaccine. LHDs have been instructed to make providers aware of new versions as they become available.

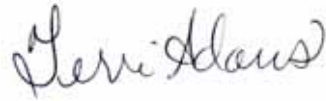
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- Camera ready Michigan VISs can be found at [www.michigan.gov/immunize](http://www.michigan.gov/immunize) .  
LHDs will make quantities available to immunization practices within their jurisdiction.

We appreciate your patience and cooperation working with us through this transition. Your staff is working hard, and it is recognized and appreciated by MDCH!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Terri Adams". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Terri Adams, RN, BSN

Vaccines for Children (VFC) Coordinator, Division of Immunization